

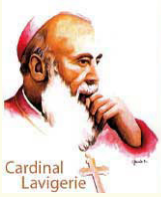
MISSIONARIES OF AFRICA

(WHITE FATHERS)



February 2024

Issue No. 464



Mary
Queen Of Africa
Pray for Us.



Missionaries Of Africa

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Editor's Word

Lent is a time for Repentance or Metanoia. Both of these words basically mean “turning back” “changing”. In our magazine today we have stories about a new foundation in Southern Ghana and a new mission for one confrere in Burundi. Changing, leaving what we know, and what we are used to, can be very difficult. There are lots of self-help books, some of which help, if we are really committed. However, in Lent we don't start by relying upon ourselves. We need to be committed certainly, but to a person who is totally committed to us - Jesus Christ the image of the invisible God. We were created out of love, for love and it is only by allowing ourselves to be loved by God that we can change and become what we were created to be.



Fr. Michael Heap MAfr

We were not created to be alone, pulling ourselves up by our own bootstraps whenever things go wrong. We were created to be loved and to share this love, first with God and then with our fellow creatures.

In the article on child trafficking we get a glimpse of the horrible things human beings can do to the weakest of us. Evil can seem to be overwhelming and that is how the Evil One would like us to see things. “You are powerless, you are too small and weak. you can't change the World. you can't change yourselves.” But that is where the lie comes in, we were never meant to do this alone. One of the deadliest afflictions for people is loneliness. We need one another but most of all we need God. Our God is a God who accepts us unconditionally. We all make mistakes. We all sin. But Jesus Christ died for us knowing full well our weakness and experiencing personally our sinfulness.

On the front of this issue of the magazine we have a depiction of the Last Supper. Jesus Christ celebrating with, and drawing together, his friends. He knew that some would leave him, or even betray him within hours, yet he was ready to offer His life, His body and blood and continues to do so in the Eucharist. Lord I am not worthy. Say but the word and I shall be healed. May the Lord accompany you through Lent and bring us all to a glorious Easter.

Our New/Old Venture in Ghana by Fr Paul Donnibe MAfr

To have a parish in the southern part of Ghana has been one of the long-term projects of the Society of the Missionaries of Africa in Ghana. We were invited into Northern Ghana as the first Catholic missionaries there at the very beginning of the 20th century. Now, at the beginning of the 21st century, at the invitation of the bishop of Konongo-Mampong, it



Processing with the Blessed Sacrament

was time to move South, to the Ashanti Region. As Jesus said to his disciples, “let us go across to the other side”. The Provincial and his Council, in dialogue with the Bishop of Konongo-Mampong, eventually decided on St. John the Baptist Parish, Nsuta-Atonsu, one hour and a half drive from Ejisu, our Formation centre in the same diocese. The Society of the African Missions (SMA) had been the first Catholic missionaries to evangelise the area 102 years ago. Atonsu is one of the biggest centres with 7 outstations. The locals are mainly farmers. Our White Father community consists of Fr.

Paul Donnibe (Ghana), Fr. Vincent de Paul Wanok Jacan (DR Congo) and Fr. Ephraim Konkobo (Burkina-Faso). All of us are fairly young confreres. Everyday we have morning prayer 6:30 am, evening prayer 7:00 pm with meals and recreation all together. We have come to a Christian community which already exists.

The parish church and mission house are already there (just beside a very busy road) and morning Masses is relatively well-attended at 5:30 am. every day. In all, we have a loving, active and witnessing apostolic Christian community. Since our Christians are available on Sunday, this is a hectic day for us, when we try to put most of our programs. Masses for the outstations on Sunday are a must. Each of us takes two outsta-



Moving on to the Parish church

ever I receive Holy Communion I help us to invite lapsed Christians back to the church, helping our parish to become more and more a Christian family.

Thursdays are for adoration of the Blessed Sacrament here in Atonsu and on **Fridays** in one of the outstations, concluding with Mass.

Saturdays are for the funeral apostolate. The locals put great emphasis on funerals and celebrate them according to their traditions. They wish the priest to participate fully and in this way we show his sympathy and union with them. It is an essential part

tions, with confessions, communion to the sick and the aged, catechism classes for first communion, baptism or confirmation, and marriage counselling.

We try to have all these programs on **Sunday** because, with farming activities and other responsibilities, it's not easy for people to come on weekdays. We try to focus on youth activities, whilst not forgetting those outside the Church who have yet to hear the Word of God.

Wednesdays are set aside for family visitation and visiting the sick and the aged. One old lady said “when-
feel part of you”. These family visits



Arriving at the church



Fr. Paul Donibe installed as Parish Priest

of Ashanti culture.

One of our main aims in the parish was to organise the youth. They are the power and pillar of the Church today and for the future; hence we want to pay attention to them and make them feel at home. When we first arrived, we found mainly elderly people in the church, the youth being almost totally absent.

This was our first

challenge. But now the youth are showing their heads in church again, actively participating and their taking responsibilities. We still have a lot to do, but I congratulate the parish youth team for their hard work. We meet after Mass in Atonsu on Sundays, and meet those in the outstations during the week. Our recent Easter youth picnic organised by the Parish was very encouraging. Slowly does it!

But all is not Youth. In our Parish we have various groups like Catholic Women Association, Christian Mothers, Catholic Youth Organisation, Altar Servers, St. Theresa Group, but these groups are not yet very active. We need to find ways to help them become more active and to play ever more effective roles in the church. Unfortunately, some think that these groups are mainly about financial contributions and so are a bit reluctant to join. We still have many challenges with many activities reduced to Sundays, but we and the people support our Church according to our abilities trying to build the Kingdom of God on our escarpment, among our green hills and up the mountains connected by our zigzag roads.

A Reflection After Visiting Elderly Confreres

by Fr. Victor Domshiwe Shehu M.Afr at present in Mali.

In a world of rapid technological advancements and ever-evolving trends, the significance of connecting with the older generation often remains obscured. Jesus blessed those who visit the sick. I firmly believe that He also blesses those who visit the elderly. Here are some of my personal experiences visiting our older confreres over the years. In



Together in house council

2010, I first met with the members of our elderly and retired confreres' community in Koln, Germany, and that of Dögen, Netherlands. My first impressions were of profoundly welcoming communities. Their faces lit up when they learned I was a confrere. I was received with a warmth that made me feel as "delicate as an eggshell", for they were delighted to encounter someone young and energetic, ready to embark on the mission. Conversations flowed, as they asked after for firsthand updates on the progress of our shared mission. The same heartening reception awaited me when I visited elderly confreres in Birmingham and London in 2012, and again in 2022 during my visits to Spain and the Netherlands.

But what else? Whilst some wore expressions of sorrow or bitterness, (challenging missionary experiences or sickness?), others radiated happiness with beaming smiles, a testament to their



Sharing a beer in the Netherlands



Sharing a beer, and watching TV together

short by ill-health and age, claiming, “Our first adversaries are the superiors” (who send us into retirement).

What do we gain by visiting the elderly? The elderly confreres have often weathered decades of tumultuous lives. Visiting them offers a unique opportunity to tap into experiences invaluable in our own lives, missions, and relationships, as well as broadening our perspective.

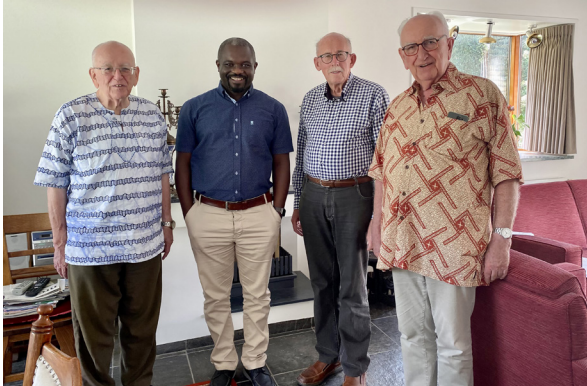
These visits preserve family traditions and history. The elderly confreres hold stories of past generations, helping us to see how we have come to be who we are.

These encounters prove emotionally rewarding for both parties. The elderly often radiate with joy in the company of visitors, fostering a sense of belonging and purpose dispelling loneliness. For the visitors, these interactions can bring a profound sense of fulfillment and gratitude, knowing they positively impact some-



A younger generation of missionaries takes up the baton in Germany

one's life. Meeting those who paved the way in areas where I have also served on the missions was especially heartwarming. We connected the dots of history in the places where they served, updating them on current news. The generational divide can sometimes foster misunderstandings and miscommunication.



*The last generation of Dutch Missionaries of Africa?
But the Mission goes on!*

Visiting the elderly confreres allows us to bridge this gap, cultivating mutual understanding and empathy.

Old age brings a host of limitations—frailty, weakness, loneliness, forgetfulness, hearing impairment, and

persistent illness. Visiting the elderly prepares us for the journey that awaits us, as well as serving as a stark reminder of the passage of time. In the fast-paced world we inhabit, we often get caught up in our daily routines and ambitions, fighting for positions, money and power, forgetting that life is transient. Each visit points to our own mortality. I was humbled when I saw the confreres who had been powerful, influential and active now in a wheel chair, some could barely able to speak nor feed themselves. I have learnt from older confreres lessons in resilience and adaptability. In their presence, I have seen that setbacks are not the terminus of one's journey but rather opportunities for growth and transformation.

Observing the physical limitations and health afflictions that often accompany old age has been a poignant reminder of the preciousness of good health and the blessings of youth. It has prompted me to gratitude for the present moment, appreciating what I have. Let us, therefore, devote time to visiting the elderly, for in doing so, we uncover a world of connections, memories, and lessons that enhance our lives immeasurably.

A New Start in Burundi

by Fr Rajesh Kalapala MAfr from India

Fr Rajesh began his mission in Congo where he injured his back riding his motorcycle on jungle tracks. After medical treatment in India, he is now in Burundi.

Hello, I am Rajesh Kalapala, a missionary in Burundi since last March 2023. This is my experience of the Republic of Burundi, a beautiful lit-



In this small country all the land is cultivated and farmed

tle country located in the heart of Central Africa. It's western border is the second deepest freshwater lake in the world, Lake Tanganyika. To the North is Rwanda to the South and East there is Tanzania and across the lake is Congo. It is equatorial with two seasons: a dry season from June to August and two wet seasons, February to May, and September to November. Its economy is based mainly on agriculture: cereals, coffee, and tea, bananas of all varieties, wheat and vegetables. Stock breeding is also very important. Although I had already studied other Bantu languages, I found Kirundi (The national language) quite complicated, but very rich and precise, which I found fascinating. Armed with a grammar book, dictionaries, etc., all that remained was my own will and determination. After my language course and language practice in our parish in Gitega,, although not fluent, I am happy that I can say Mass and communicate with people to a certain extent. In the parish health centre, run by White Sisters (MSOLA). I continue to practice the language whilst ministering to the sick. Although I encountered suffer-



Hundreds and hundreds of hills like Rwanda

ing there, I also met mothers with their newborn babies and the joy of life given by God. With the nurses also I could share joys and sorrows. I discovered that Religious are held in great respect. A surprising issue, people often reminded me about when visiting, was always to be careful while visiting others. There is a lot of suspicion and fear of poison. But despite everything, I put my trust in Christ. Despite some mistrust at the very beginning, I really like these people and so I made friends which helped me to easily learn the language. During my visits to certain fam-



Fr Rajesh with altar servers

ilies. I came across poverty, where some women live whose husbands have fled, leaving them with 5 or 6 children and no means to take care of them. It is heartbreaking. Yet they welcomed me into their homes, without hypocrisy, with the little they had but with great love. Visiting them. I was sincerely moved. After my language course I joined my parish community as a curate in Bujumbura, the capital city. We have 2 communities in Bujumbura; Maison d'Accueil (Visitor Centre) and the parish. All of us work in the parish, which is situated in the most Muslim district of Bujumbura. It is a dynamic and very lively parish, with a football field, basketball court and study room. It is open to everyone of any culture or religion and is a place of practical inter-religious dialogue. We have 12 basic Christian communities in the parish: 3 Kiswahili-speaking and 9 Kirundi-speaking. They are very different in the way they organize their activities. The Kiswahili-speaking community



With abundant rainfall, Burundi is green everywhere

is an “extroverted” community, that loves atmosphere, hosting celebrations, always alive with different activities. But it is a community of rumours, sometimes creating conflicts in the parish. As for the Kirundi community, it is more “introverted” with a great sense of respect for the sacred and for the priests and sisters. Its members keep to themselves. It is a community seeking to grow in faith. This diversity constitutes an asset for the parish helping us grow. I have had plenty of opportunity to practise what I learned in Conflict Management studies.

Child Trafficking: A Global Scourge

by Michael Okunola MAfr, at present a deacon in Kinshasa RDCongo

“See that you do not despise not even one of these little ones” Matthew 18:10

Last year a movie entitled “Sound of Freedom” was released, sparking



mixed reactions from viewers. It was all about child trafficking for sexual exploitation, and many people perceived it as overly political, promoting conspiracy theories. I was surprised at this reaction wondered if it was because many of us are unaware of this reality. We only notice it if we open our eyes and ears to what is happening around us. Then I realized that not so long ago, I had myself come across children, victims of trafficking, without realising it for what it was.

Playing in safety of the “home”

Child trafficking is a deeply unsettling and pervasive issue, plaguing societies across the globe. A grave violation of human rights, it inflicts immense suffering on the most vulnerable members of our societies — children. The term covers a range of illicit activities, from forced labour and sexual exploitation to child soldiers and organ trafficking. It is estimated 35% of all trafficking victims worldwide are children. However, this number is likely an underestimation due to the clandestine nature of the crime.

Last year I was working with street children who were housed and sheltered at a centre which provides them with food, teaches them skills to help them survive, and, if possible, reintegrates them with their families. This apostolate opened my eyes to the different realities which force children onto the streets. A common factor is poverty. Many of



Wrestling games, a reflection of their lives outside?

these children have gone through traumatic experiences. I was simply to be there with them, chatting, encouraging them, and, most importantly, listening to them. I met two children there, a 10 year-old boy and his 7 year-old sister. They sat alone, rarely interacting with other kids. Initially, they were reluctant to talk to me, but through persistence and by the grace of God, I eventually broke the ice. When I asked the boy how they ended up at the centre, he explained that they came from a village in the interior part of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Due to financial difficulties, their parents could not afford to send them to school or even properly feed them. Then, a woman approached their parents, offering to take the children into her care and promising to provide them with an education in Kinshasa, the capital. The children were ecstatic, anticipating a better life. But once in Kinshasa, the woman made them domestic servants. If they failed to perform a task well, they were beaten. This continued for some time until one day, for reasons unknown to them, the woman took them to the city centre and simply abandoned them by the roadside. There they remained, living and begging on the streets until a kind Samaritan brought them to the centre that houses and feeds street kids.

This story, though short, is a small example of child trafficking. Child trafficking thrives where there is poverty, inequality, and instability. The

Democratic Republic of Congo is one such environment. The ongoing conflict in the eastern part of the Congo has contributed to an increase in the displacement of families and poverty levels in the country. Poverty is a major factor that makes children vulnerable to trafficking, since families living in poverty are often desperate for economic opportunities. Children in conflict zones or displaced communities are especially vulnerable, separated as they are from their families and support networks. Child traffickers often make false promises of a better life, education, or employment to lure children or convince parents to give up their children.



More peaceful games, boys and girls together

The consequences of trafficking children are many, devastating, and long-lasting. Victims often endure physical and psychological trauma, enduring physical and emotional abuse, leaving lasting scars. Child trafficking also robs children of their childhood and denies them the opportunity

to learn, play, and grow.

Reports have shown that child trafficking in the Democratic Republic of Congo involves forced labour in artisanal mining sites, agriculture, domestic servitude, armed-group recruitment of children in combat and support roles, as well as sex trafficking. I feel that raising awareness about child trafficking and educating communities is vital for its prevention. Moreover, government initiatives aimed at alleviating poverty and providing access to education would significantly reduce the vulnerability of parents and children alike.

But only through concerted global action can we hope to eradicate the horrors of child trafficking and give every child the chance to live a safe, dignified, and fulfilling life.

A Catholic Priest in Jerusalem

by Fr Augustin Sawadogo MAfr

To begin, it might be helpful to situate my sharing with a question. How does it feel to visit Jerusalem as a catholic priest? But first let me briefly give it a background. Before becoming a member of the Society of the Missionaries of Africa, also known as the White Fathers, like all my confreres, I was trained for ten years in different countries. My first missionary experience outside my country (Burkina Faso) was in Khartoum, Sudan, when I was still a seminarian. There, I had to first learn colloquial and classical Arabic before being able to take part in the parish activities with Christians and Muslims. Whilst in Sudan, I participated in many religious related activities. This experience deeply enriched and fashioned my interest for interreligious relations. Arriving in Jerusalem in August 2023, after I had already been an ordained priest for over 10 years and having taught for a few years at the Pontifical Institute of Arabic and Islamic Studies in Rome, I was drawn to



In front of the Dome of the Rock

the opportunity to delve deeper into interreligious relations. On a practical level my intention was to enhance my understanding before delivering talks on interfaith dialogue which I was foreseen to give in Rome and Tunisia. On another level I was responding to a call for assistance from fellow Missionaries in Jerusalem during the summer. I was to take on pastoral duties, celebrating Mass for different religious communities and welcoming pilgrims at the Basilica of Saint Anne. For three weeks, my spiritual and physical journeys going to celebrate Mass began each morning with



In front of St Anne's Basilica

a walk through Jerusalem's sacred sites, with the Psalms echoing in my head. On foot I would cross from the Old City's Lion's Gate to Saint Stephen's sanctuary, where St Stephen's martyrdom is commemorated. Then, crossing the tranquil Cedron Valley, spoken of so many times in the Old Testament, I would descend to the Church of the Virgin Mary. It is an Armenian Church on the spot where Our Lady is said to have died. There is even a muslim plaque there showing the direction of prayer . Next I would ascend the Mount of Olives, following Jesus' steps but also those of King David

as he fled Jerusalem when his son Absalom revolted against him. This would bring me to the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus prayed the night before His crucifixion. From there He could see his betrayer and the soldiers carrying torches, crossing the Cedron Valley in the night coming to arrest him. Finally I would arrive at the site traditionally believed to be the place of the Ascension and there I celebrated Mass.

Celebrating Mass at these revered sites was not for me merely an obligation but an intimate communion with history and spirituality. Each step along this sacred path resonated with the Gospel narratives, evoking a profound sense of reverence and awe, providing a lived experience of Jerusalem being regarded as the "fifth gospel", written not on paper and parchment but in stone and geography.

Beyond my pastoral responsibilities, I was blessed with the opportunity to meet with diverse individuals and sites across the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic faiths. I visiting the Western Wall (sometimes called the Wailing Wall where Jews pray at what is left of their Temple afetr the Romans destroyed it), the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (covering the sites where Jesus was crucified and then buried), and Al-Aqsa sanc-



In front of the basilica and pool

tuary (which Muslims believe Muhammad went on his way to visit heaven), each encounter sparked intriguing conversations reflective of the city's rich multicultural and religious history and openness to visitors. At Saint Anne's Basilica traditionally known as the birthplace of the blessed Virgin Mary, I welcomed pilgrims and tourists, and engaged in discussions regarding the shared Jewish, Christian, and Muslim heritage that this site embodies. This basilica was built as a church by the Crusaders next to the ruins of a Byzantine Church next to the pool where Jesus

healed the cripple who claimed he could not reach the waters in time to be healed. When Saladin retook the city from the Crusaders it became a religious school. An Arabic inscription above the Basilica's entrance, dating back to 1192 AD, encapsulates the blend of religious histories, fostering meaningful dialogues among visitors. The inscription reads as follows: "In the name of God, Clement and Merciful! Everything good you have comes from God! This blessed madrassa was founded by the victorious king, our master Salah-al-Dunia-w-al-Din, the Sultan of Islam and Muslims, Abu al-Muzaffar Yusuf son of Ayyub son of Shadi, who enlivened the empire of the ruler of the believers. May God bless his victories, and fill him with good things in this world and the next. The establishment was founded for the doctors of the rite of Imam Abu Abdullah Muhammad, son of Edris al-Shafi'i, may God be pleased with him'. In the year five hundred eighty-eight. (588AH=1192AD). To conclude, my exploration of Jerusalem as a Catholic priest was a profound encounter with the interwoven tapestry of faiths, histories, and spiritual legacies. This enriched my understanding of interreligious relations and reinforced my interest for interreligious dialogue.

HUB OF ENCOUNTER AND DIALOGUE

by Fr Donatien Mpawenayo MAfr from Burundi, bursar of IBLA

Missionaries of Africa, from their very beginnings in Algiers in 1968 took seriously the fact that meeting Islam implied finding ways of fostering mutual respect. This respect comes from getting to know each other and is why Cardinal Lavignerie insisted that his missionaries must eat, dress, and speak like the people they were sent to. IBLA was founded to fulfil this objective. The people of North Africa speak dialects that have been influenced by Arabic since Arabs invaded their land in the

7th century AD. Therefore, as Missionaries began to learn the culture of these people, this led naturally to founding a language and cultural centre, IBLA (Institut des Belles Lettres Arabes), literally translated as “Institute of beautiful Arabic Letters”, meaning Institute for Arabic Literature. It was to help newly appointed missionaries, both Missionaries of Africa and those belonging to other congregations, to learn Arabic and North African cultures, especially Tunisian culture, with a view serving the locals better.

We are still here now to keep up the work our elder brothers/our predecessors did. We have a library where students from nearby universities come to do their research. We welcome them, and help them find relevant books in the library. We make photocopies for them and answer ques-



Books and archives for consultation



Study and reading room

tions. We have a magazine that is published twice a year. This contains articles written by a group of Tunisian intellectuals. Ours is to help distribute the journal to universities. We have a youth centre, as well, where we receive the young people of our locality in order to provide them with an environment conducive to study. We teach them English and French to help them

improve their skills in these two languages. We even play games with them so as to help them to build their social skills for cooperation and team work. Most of these young people come from underprivileged families. They are all Tunisians from Muslim background. Such is our service on a daily basis and it is the way we practise encounter and dialogue. The conflicts in the Middle East puts us in a delicate position. We are constantly answering questions about “whose side we are on”. Due to the rise of a certain type of Islam, the level on which the dialogue with intellectuals was done in the past is no longer the



Local children playing in our courtyard



We have a typical North African walled garden

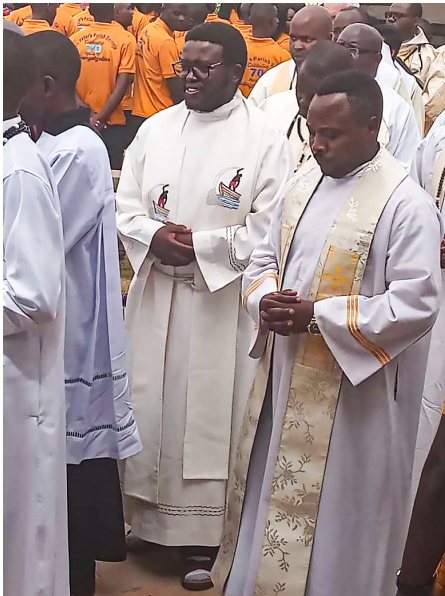
same. The rate of unemployment is high here, so some young people are turning to thievery. This impacts us in different ways. For example, we depend on our car to get us about but it is at risk because the garage door is insufficient. We live in the heart of the Old City, directly opposite a mosque, next to the market. This allows us to feel the temperature of the daily life. We meet and share the joyful and the painful moments of the people. Marriages, burials and other events allow us to express our humanity by sharing in these moments with our neighbours. Serving God in this mission of Encounter and Dialogue is really beautiful for me, a wonderful way to live Mission fully.



Our well and orange trees

70 years of Evangelizing by Fr Douglas Ogato MAfr from Kenya

On November 5, we gathered in St. Peter's Serenje Parish in the Catholic diocese of Kabwe, central Zambia to mark the 70th anniversary of evangelization by the White Fathers in the parish. Hundreds of parishioners, young and old, trekked long distances from far-flung, rural corners of the parish to come and celebrate this joyful occasion. Some walked for more than 30 miles to attend the celebration. Agatha Simeo, an 83 year old lady, who had walked for 12 miles with her grandchildren to attend the occasion, said that she could not miss this occasion. Her grandfather, Simeo Laishi Ngosa, a catechists and a nephew to the Chief of the Lala people in Serenje, had played a key role in the establishment of Serenje mission. Numerous White Fathers working in different parts of Zambia came to Serenje to witness and celebrate this occasion. The liturgy was presided over by Bishop Clement Mulenga of Kabwe diocese. In his homily, he thanked the White Fathers for their selfless and industrious service to



Fr Douglas (centre) with other priests

establishment of Serenje mission. Numerous White Fathers working in different parts of Zambia came to Serenje to witness and celebrate this occasion. The liturgy was presided over by Bishop Clement Mulenga of Kabwe diocese. In his homily, he thanked the White Fathers for their selfless and industrious service to

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Smartphones are everywhere



Catechists with a goat for the feast

the people of Serenje and beyond. He acknowledged that the founding and establishment of Serenje mission had not been easy. The White Fathers' first two attempts in 1938 and 1942 were unsuccessful as they were denied permission by the local colonial authority who favoured the Church of Scotland Mission that was already established in Serenje. The authorities argued that too many churches in the area would confuse the local people. The third attempt, made towards the end of 1952, was led by catechist Simeo Laishi, and was successful.

Simeo was an experienced catechist who had been working with the White Fathers in the Katibunga mission since 1938. He moved to Serenje together with his family towards the end of 1952, and in 1953, together with with two White Fathers, founded and established Serenje mission on a 3 acre land near Ibolelo stream. The availability of water played a key role in choosing the site of the mission. It is believed that this third attempt succeeded mainly because of catechist Simeo Laishi's relationship with the local traditional chieftaincy of the Lala people in Serenje. He was a nephew to Chief Kankomba we Lala - famously known as Chief Muchinda. History has it that catechist Simeo played a role in the conversion

Simeo was an experienced catechist



Bishop Clement confirming young Christians



Parishoners coming from far and wide to celebrate

of his uncle to Catholicism by baptising him in danger of death. Later after his uncle passed away, catechist Simeo would refuse to take on the chieftomship of the Lala people claiming that assuming the throne would hinder him from fully serving God. According to the Lala tradition, it is an umwipwa, a nephew of the chief, who has a right to inherit the throne. Catechist Simeo is actually the grandfather of our late confrere, Fr. Francis Kangwa MAfr, who passed away in April last in Tanzania.

May he rest in peace! Right up to the present moment, catechists continue to play an important role in the mission of evangelization



The mothers are the backbone of every parish

in Serenje parish as the parish is vast, with many far away outstation churches that are in the pastoral care of the catechists. Priests only get to visit these outstation churches once a month, and that is only when there are enough priests. Thus catechists are closer to the people in the outstation churches than are the priests, and they carry out a lot of pastoral activities, such as leading Sunday services, giving marriage instructions, teaching catechism, celebrating funeral services and accompanying bereaved families.



Missionaries of Africa, old and young remembering

As Serenje parish celebrates these milestones in the history of Zambian Christianity, we remain grateful to God for the gift of the many White Fathers and many catechists who selflessly devoted their lives to the mission of

Serenje. I am happy to have worked in Serenje, first as a stagiaire from November 2009 to June 2011, and later on as deacon from January 2016 to June 2016, and eventually as a priest from September 2016 to March 2019. To God be the glory forever and ever.



Our Confrere Freed

Thanks be to God and to the prayers of so many throughout the world, on 26th November 2023 our confrere, Fr Ha-Jo Lohre MAfr was released by his kidnappers. His release came after a year of captivity on the day we Missionaries of Africa were celebrating our Founder Cardinal Charles Lavigerie. Fr Ha-Jo was un-

harmed by the group and returned to Germany for rest and recuperation.

Our heartfelt thanks to all those who prayed for his release. God is good.



Parents & Friends Association
EVENTS

Mass for Deceased of the Society and Parents & Friends
14th April 2024
Starts at 12 noon followed by a Buffet Lunch

Mass for Parents & Friends Reunion August 25th 2024.
Starts at 12 noon followed by Lunch at the Kings' Park Hotel

BINGO EVENINGS:

8th March 2024

17th May 2024

13th September 2024

15th November 2024

Bingo sessions all start at 7pm

Your charitable prayers are requested

for those who have recently died
and our deceased parents,
relatives, friends and benefactors.



Miss E Francis (Birmingham)
Miss Ann E Woods (Northwood)
Tony Menezes (Sweden)
Mr P D McGeough (Oxon)
Mrs Trudie M Perry (Solihull)
Sr Mary Joseph Leapman (Carnforth)

Mrs Christine Collins (Lancaster)
Manoel Rodrigues (Goa)
Carmilla Menezes (Sweden)
Mr Raymond Blakeman
Mrs I McRory (Argyll)

Mr Michael Gallagher (Southam)
Mr Edward Tolan (Glasgow)
Mr George Wacholz (London)
Mrs E Jackson (Greenock)
Mr Michael Logan (Cheshire)
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